

WATER/WASTEWATER FACILITIES COMMISSION COMMISSION MINUTES

January 14, 2015

A meeting of the City of Fitchburg Water / Wastewater Commission was held on January 14, 2015 at the JA Provincial Building, 1200 Rindge Rd, Fitchburg, MA.

The meeting commenced at 4:40 p.m.

Members present: Lenny Laakso, Commissioner DPW
Rick Healey
Michael McLaughlin
George Siener
Ron Lubianez

Members Absent: Carol Brown

Others present: Denis Meunier, Deputy Commissioner Water
Jeff Murawski, Deputy Commissioner Wastewater
Mary Jane Franklin
Mark Gionet

ITEM # 1: Approval of last meetings minutes:

The minutes for the December 10, 2014 meeting were approved by unanimous vote.

ITEM # 2: Public Forum:

689 Franklin Rd Sewer Connection:

During a real estate closing for a different property, it was discovered that 689 Franklin Rd had been tied into the sewer system several years ago. Mr. Gionet was notified of the oversight and given a bill with the back charges. Mr. Gionet requested a hearing with the Water/Wastewater Commission to appeal these charges.

Mark Gionet introduced himself as the owner of 689 Franklin Rd and stated he felt the amount of the bill (for back sewerage charges) was unfair and requested that the amount be lowered. It was established that Mr. Gionet owns multiple properties in Fitchburg and receives water/sewer bills for all his properties except 689 Franklin Rd. When asked why he hadn't reported to the Water or Wastewater Departments of not receiving a sewer bill (he stated he was aware of being tied in) he explained he thought the sewer charges were attached to his taxes.

In a previous email correspondence (dated November 18, 2014) from Mr. Murawski, it was explained to Mr. Gionet that in a recent similar situation, the January 2012 billing period was used as the collectable cut off point. During this time, the billing transitioned from quarterly to monthly billing, making it a logical cut off point. It is also within the three year collectable time period, determined by former City Solicitor Timothy Hillman.

Every non metered sewer only account in the City is billed a flat rate of \$60.83 per month since monthly billing began in January 2012.

There was a discussion regarding the amount Mr. Gionet should be required to pay in addition to whether there would be a “grace period” with no interest charges if he paid within a defined timetable.

It was decided that Mr. Murawski will draft a letter to Mr. Gionet, on behalf of the Commission, explaining how this issue will be handled.

A motion to follow thru on the recommendations made by the Commission to Mr. Gionet was made by Dr. Lubianez, seconded by Mr. Siener and approved by unanimous vote.

ITEM # 3: Review of Water Division Capital Projects:

Mr. Meunier informed the commission of his decision to retire as of March 6, 2015.

He has consulted with David Berger (Water Distribution Manager) regarding Capital Improvement projects. Together, they have established a list of projects they believe are important and would like to see prioritized in the near future.

Facilities:

Demolish the Burbank Hospital chlorination building and reroute the water main (\$10,000 - \$15,000) this is small bunker like building with a 24” main going thru the basement. Prior to the treatment facilities being built, chlorine used to be injected into that main. The pipe is now showing signs of deterioration.

Replace roofs on the three pressure reducing valve stations; Narrows Rd, Marshall Pump Station and Bickford Station (\$100,000 - \$125,000). Narrows Rd needs the most immediate attention.

Repair the inlet gate from Fitchburg Reservoir to the Gate House (\$60,000)

Repair and rehab the Meetinghouse Reservoir Gate House and traveling screen (\$50,000 - \$75,000). An alternative solution would be to extend the intake out into the reservoir (\$125,000)

Cut and cap a 24” transmission line from Wyman Pond to Narrows Rd per DEP order (\$6,000-\$10,000)

Evaluate upgrade alternatives to SCADA and reporting software and update communications software from 10 remote locations (\$8,000-\$15,000)

Valves and small diameter water mains:

Replace water main valves:

Prospect St at Depranos

Main at Myrtle

Myrtle at Green

Priority replacement of small diameter (1.5” – 2”) water mains at the following locations:

Newport Street (180’)

Fitch Hill Ave (340’)

Avon Place (120')
Lovisa Street (530')
Norfolk and St Andrews (230')
Pershing Street –Leroy to Reingold (400')

ITEM # 4: Update on CSS-4D project:

Mr. Murawski updated the commission on the 4D project, which is the current sewer separation job in progress. He explained there was a consent decree milestone associated with this project and that obligation was fulfilled on December 23, 2014.

Three independent reporting items were reported on in two deliverables. One deliverable related to the previous separation project 2B3C and the other related to 4D, which is the ongoing project.

4D:

A combined sewer over flow regulator was eliminated from the system with this sewer separation and is now a drain manhole.

The constructed facilities are online and in operation: obligation associated with 4D was met.

2B3C:

See item #6

A sizable percentage of the project still needs to be constructed, however it's largely associated with sewer replacement not sewer separation. The decision was made to end any further work until the spring of 2015.

ITEM # 5: Update on SSU Project and OPM selection status:

Mr. Murawski updated the Commission on the secondary system upgrade project. Fitchburg was listed on the DEP/SRF/IEP intended use project listing. The operations project manager selection was moving forward and a request for proposal was issued. Seven submissions were reviewed and narrowed to three. Those three firms have been interviewed and reference checks have begun. A recommendation to negotiate a contract for OPM services based on qualifications will be made before pay scales are considered.

ITEM # 6: Review of Consent Decree reporting submittals including an Update of Post-Construction Monitoring Plan:

2B3C was a sewer separation project intended to pull drain and storm water out of the sanitary sewer. The catch basins that would previously go thru a combined line and go to the treatment plant or in heavy rain events would overflow thru regulators and discharge into the environment are now going into dedicated storm drains.

An unexpected area of connection was discovered thru a rain event on Hazel St It will require approximately 1,000 ft. of new drains to change the thirteen catch basins over from the sanitary to the storm systems. There was a lengthy discussion on how this project was missed.

One submittal associated with the 2B3C project was required to be sent by the end of December 2014 and is related to evaluating the effectiveness of this particular project. Another part of this submission to EPA/DEP was to indicate why this wasn't closed and to propose a course of action to address it.

A Post Construction Monitoring Plan was submitted to EPA/DEP at the end of December 2012. The plan involved collecting data by taking water samples from a number of monitoring locations along the Nashua River and examining the overflow regulators. A meeting has been scheduled with EPA/DEP on February 2, 2015 to discuss the plan.

An additional Post Construction Monitoring Report is required and will be submitted by the end December 2016.

ITEM #7: Review and discussion of the I/I fees and how they are allocated:

A meeting was held recently with a developer proposing to convert an old mill building into a domestic residential building. Past projects of this nature have been assessed an infiltration and inflow fee. The fee is based on the anticipated amount of sewer flow that would be contributed by the development. Mr. Murawski stated one possibility for handling this issue would be to work with the developer to complete a drainage project that would remove the required inflow in lieu of fee payment. There was some discussion about having this codified and developing a revolving fund.

ITEM # 8: Update of East Plant NPDES Permit renewal application:

Mr. Murawski reported he is in the drafting process of the NPDES Permit application at the East Plant. It will be submitted in late February.

ITEM # 9: Update of the Feasibility Study for an anaerobic digestion facility to be sited at the West Plant:

Mr. Murawski reported the main delay in this process is vetting the source organics that would be contributing to this facility. A scope change was made to look more at bio solids as the organic constituent to be digested. Taking in treatment plant sludge (bio solids) from other facilities was discussed as well as going towards a regional facility, which would also address Fitchburg's sludge needs. Mr. Murawski discussed preparing an informational outreach for the public.

ITEM # 10: Other Business:

Mr. Murawski reported an electrician has not been hired and the previous electrician recently retired. The position has been advertised. This will be posted until the end of the month. There was some discussion about this position and who will handle Wastewater's electrical needs.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2015 at 4:30 pm at the JA Provincial Building, 1200 Rindge Rd, Fitchburg, MA.

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 PM

Minutes Prepared by _____
Mary Jane Franklin